DO YOU KNOW WHY - - - People Kick At The Cost Of Necessities? INTERNATIONAL CARTOON CO N Y. 411



# KING-9F THE A Romance of Adventure 6x TALBOT MUNDY

SYNOPSIS.

Chapter 1.-At the beginning of the world war Capt. Athelstan King of the British Indian army and of its secret service, is ordered to Delhi to meet Yasmini, a dancer, and go with her to Khinjan to quiet the outlaws there who are said by spies to be preparing for a Jihand or holy war.

CHAPTER II .- On his way to Delhi King quietly folls a plan to assassinate him and gets evidence that Yasimini is after him.

Chapter III.- In Delhi he is met by Rewa Gunga, Yasmini's man, who North and that he, the Rangar, has been left to escore King.

the Rangar attempts to outwit King. lashless eyes. but fails. Ismall, an Afridi belonging to Yasmini, is given to King for a ser asked-as a wolf might ask what a

Chapter V.-King rescues some of Yasmini's men and takes them North with him, tricking the Rangar into going ahead of him.

Chapter VI.-Rejoined by the Rangar at the mouth of the Khyber pass, King and party start through the pass for Khinian.

Chapter Vil. The Ranger desc. s the pass.

Chapter VIII-King sends to hes Name it!" brother at Ali Masjid fort, meets him alone in the pass, and with his aid transforms bimself into a native hakim or man of medicine

Chapter IX.-Calling Ismail and the men back he at first nuzzles and then atonishes and delights them by hs transformation. Ismall grows Friend ly and seems appalled at the thought

that Yasmini may love King. Chapter X.-In Khinjan King is taken into the mosque and Ismali and another falsely witnessing for him that he has slain an bugilshman, he is admitted turn the mosque wall into

the eplebrated caves.

He knew the street of oid, although It had changed perhaps a dozen times since he had seen it. It was a cal-desac, and at the end of it, just as on his previous visit, there stood a stone mosque, whose roof leaned back at a steep angle against the mountainside, It was a famous mosque in its way, for the bed sheet of the Prophet is known to hang in it, preserved against the ravages or time and the touch of infidels by priceless Afghan rugs before and behind, so that it hangs like a great thin sandwich before the rear stone wall. King bad seen it.

Toward the mosque the one-eyed ruffian led the way, with the long, leisurely-seeming gait of a mountaineer. At to be key enough. The nails of his the door, in the middle of the end of left hand nearly pierced the palm, but the street, he paused and struck on the he smiled-pleasantly. lintel three times with his gun butt. And that was a strange proceeding, to say the least, in a land where the mosque is public resting place for homeless ones, and all the "faithful"

have a right to enter: A mullah, shaven like a mummy for Rome unaccountable reason even his eyebrows and eyelashes had been removed-pushed his bare head through the door and blinked at them. There spy!" sont was some whispering and more staring, and at last the mullah turned his

The door slammed. The one-eved guide grounded his gun-butt on the stone, and the procession waited. watched by the crowd that had lost its

Interest sufficiently to talk and joke. In two minutes the mullah returned and threw a most over the threshold, It turned out to be the end of a long nar- whispers. row strip that he kicked and unrolled in front of him all across the floor of vere allowed to enter.

Which proves I was right after ill!" murmured King to himself.

to the place, to the effect that the entrance into Khinjan caves might possibly be inside the mosque. Nobody had believed it likely, and he had not more than half favored it himself; may lead into a death-trap, to see one's first opinions confirmed.

He nodded to himself as the outer door slammed shut behind them, for that was another most unusual circum-

A faint light shone through stillike windows, changing darkness into gloom, and little more than vaguely low at that spot. hinting at the Prophet's hed sheet. But for a section of white wall to either side of it, the relic might have seemed tells him that she has already gone part of the shedows. The multah stood with his back to it and beckoned King nearer. He approached until he could see the pattern on the covering rugs. tract as little attention to himself as Chapter IV.-In Yasmini's house and the pink rims round the mullah's

swered, and showed the gold bracelet on his welst

blinked a time or two, and though he began to be more pronounced. All at did not salute the bracelet, as others once the wall shook and they gaped had invariably done, his manner underwent a perceptible change.

What is thy name?" "Kurram Khan, hakim."

"We need thee in Khinian caves! King and Ismall, with three others, in But none enter who have not earned right to enter! There is but one key, marched-a tunnel, split in two to

> King drow in his breath. He had hoped Yasmini's talisman would prove again before going very far.



toxxxxxii.2 "I Slew an Englishman!"

"He who would enter must slay a

written law!" he said.

made his attend run cold, but his ex- this entrance guarded could be held pression was one of sinful pride,

"Whom? When? Where?"

himself to order!

"Where is his body?" "Ask the vultures! Ask the kites!" "And thy witnesses?"

Hoping against hope, King turned and waved his hand. As he did so, being quick-eyed, he saw Ismail drive an elbow home into Darya Khan's ribs.

and enught a quick interchange of

"These men are all known to me." said the mullah. "They have right to the mosque. After that it was not so enter here. They have right to tessatonishing that the horses and mules tify. Did ye see him slay his man?" 'Aye!" lied Ismail, prompt as

friend can be. "Ave? Hed Darya Khan, fearful of

balry hand gripped King's arm from smooth and wet. behind, and Ismail's voice hissed hotbreathed in his ear.

skin? Be thy kismet as thy courage, then-but I am hers, not thy man! Hers, thou light of life-though God

knows I love thee!"

The mullah seized the Prophet's bed sheet and its covering rugs in both hands, with about as much reverence as salesmen show for what they keep in stock. The whole lot slid to one side by means of noisy rings on a rod. and a wall lay bare, built of crudely cut but well laid blocks. It appeared but It is good, even when the next step to reach unbroken across the whole width of the mosque's interior.

On the floor lay a mallet, a peculiar thing of bronze, cast in one piece, handle and all. The multah took it in his hand and struck the stone floor harply once-then twice again-then three times-then a dozen times in quick succession. The floor rang hol-

After about a minute there came one answering hammer stroke from beyond the wall. Then the mullah laid the mallet down and though King ached to pick it up and examine it he did not dare. His business was to atpossible; and to that end he folded his hands and looked reverent, as if "What is thy desire?" the mullah entering some Mecca of his dreams. Through his horn-rimmed spectacles his eyes looked far away and dreamy. "Audience with her!" King an- But it would have been a mistake to suppose that a detail was escaping

The red eye-rims of the muliah The irregular lines in the masoury by an inch or two, as happens when an earthquake has shaken buildings "That is proof that she knows thee, without bringing anything down." Then an irregular section of wall began to front of him, leaving a gap through which eight men abreast could have right and left. Judging by the angle | pointing. of the two divisions they became one

The mullah stood aside and metioned King to enter. But the oneeyed thrust himself between Darya Khan and Ismail, pushed King aside and took the lead.

"Nay!" he said, "I ma responsible

It was the first time he had spoken of words.

The tunnel was pierced in twenty of mea with enough ammunition could have held it forever against an army. King ever saw of him, The guide led, and King followed him, filled with curiosity.

'More have sought to enter! Some who remained without were wisest! this road !"

would be like if her millions knew of have dared expect.

CHAPTER XI.

there were holes that if they led us ants of Kurram Khan, the hakim!" King presumed into caves above, left not an inch of all the long passage that man before wirnesses in the teeth of it was impregnable; for no artillery who would hugh. heavy enough to pound the mountain "And thou?" The boast within range. Whatever hiding place forever, given food and cartridges!

The tunnel wound to right and left din began to be swallowed in a greater from view by a blanket. It was like having spells cast on one that entered from the farther end. After two sharp turns they came out British army's everlasting luck that unexpectedly into the glaze of blue day, one of the men, who set the great brass nearly stunned by light and sound, A an ocean in the grip of a typhoon.

When his wits recovered from the seen and lived to tell about, and that in rapid succession. is an experience more potent than un- "Does it pain thee, brother?" asked broken rum.

They had emerged from a roundmonthed tunnel-it looked already like and my veins are one !" . . . a rabbit-hole, so huge was the cliff be- The man did not notice the eagerhind-on to a ledge of rock that formed ness beaming out of King's horaa sort of road along one side of a rimmed spectacles, but Ismall did; it Is a steel box at Simila is a memIsmail's elbow.

"Then enter!" said the priest rescemed a mile up, was blue sky, to tues as assistant.

signedly, as one who admits a com- which limestone walls ran sheer, with numicant against his better judgment. scarcely a foothold that could be seen He turned his back on them so as Beneath, so deep that eyes could not to face the Prophet's bed sheet and guess how deep, yawned the stained the rear wall, and in that minute a gorge of the underworld, many-colored,

And out of a great, jagged slit in the side of the cliff, perhaps a thousand "Ready of tongue! Ready of wit! feet below them, there poured down whose breadth seemed not less than half a mile. It spouted seventy or at. and its din was like the voice of all creation.

Ismail came and stood by King in silence, taking his hand, as a little child might. Presently he stooped and picked up a stone and tossed if over. "Gone!" he said simply. "That down FOR RENT-Furnished room in prithere is Earth's Drink!"

men boast about?"

"Nay! It is not!" snapped Ismail. "Then, where-

But the one-yed guide beckoned imhimself an idiot.

now and then at crazy heights above reached by artificial steps hewn out the stone. Others were below, reached from the road by means of ladders, that trembled and swayed over the dizzying waterfall. Most of the caves were inhabited, for armed men and sullen women came to their entrances to stare.

the mule. He could hear when Ismail ket garden. Tel. 957-W. whispered:

"Be brave, little hakim! She loves

At last the guide halted, in the mid-

do of a short steep slope where the move quite smoothly away from in path was less than six feet wide and a Khan," he boasted, "He can cure anynarrow cave mouth gave directly onto thing, and for a very little fee!" "Be content to rest here!" he said. King drew the covering from his row

"Thy cave?" asked King.

"Nay. God's! I am the caretaker!" The "Hills" are very plous and polite, between the acts of robbing and shedding blood,

"Allah, they, reward thee, brother!" answered King. "Allah give sight to rest, before he could even protest; and thy blind eye! Allah give thee chil- his howls of rage did him no good, for dren! Allah give thee peace, and to Ismail drove the hilt of a kuife be- LOST A twenty-dollar bill in Wheelall thy house!"

The guide salaamed, half-meelingly, and the appeared to resent the waste bull-wondering at such eloquence. paged in the passage to point into the side caves tout debouched to either places in the roof for rifle fire; a score hand, turned on his heel and stalked out of the cavern. It was the last

King turned back and looked into "Many have entered!" sang the and mule fed, watered and hedded the other caves-saw the weary horse lashless mullah in a sing-song chant. down-took note of the running water that rushed out of a rock fissure and gurgled out of sight down another one I count them! I keep count! Many -examined the servants' cave and saw went in: Not all came out again by that they had been anaply provided with blankers. There was nothing lack-"Lead along, Charon!" King grinned.. ing that the most exacting traveler He needed some sort of pleasantry to could have demanded at such a dissteady his nerves. But, even so, he tance from civilization. There was wondered what the nerves of India more than the most exacting would

"Ismail!" he shouted, and jumped at the revolver-cracklike echo of his voice. Ismail came running.

"Make the men carry the mule's The gap closed up behind them and packs into this cave. You and Darya the tunnel began to echo weirdly. Over Khan stay here and help me open their heads, at irregular intervals, them. Remember, ye are both assist-

"They will hough at us! They will laugh at us!" clucked Ismail, but he tould not have been swept by rifle fire. harried to obey, white King wondered

Within an hour c delegation came from no less a person than Yasmini herself, bearing her compliments, and hot food savory enough to make a brass idol's mouth water. By this time "Athelstan King—a British areficer like a snake, growing lighter and light- ments and drugs and bandages all laid King had his sets of surgical instru--sent on his way to these 'Hills' to erafter each bend; and soon their own out on one of the beds and covered

It was only one more proof of the dish of food on the floor near King. roar came up from below like that of had a swollen cheek, and that he alimentary canal. should touch the swelling clumsily as

shock. King struggled with a wild des he lifted his hand to shake back a lock sire to yell, for before him was what of greasy hair. There followed an most tasteless, except for a sourish po servant of British India had ever outh like flint struck on steel ten times twinge which is not unpleasant.

Kurram Khan the hakim, "Are there devils in Tophet? Fire

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TTO THE CONTENTION

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